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AUTHOR Hughes, Phillip; And Others
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ABSTRACT

One of seven studies in the "Education and Polity" series, this document looks at alternative futures and the interface of education with four areas: communication; employment and leisure; state policy; and technology. The studies were commissioned during 1984 and were conducted by interdisciplinary teams: two in Australia, two in India, one in Japan, one in Malaysia, and one in the Republic of Korea. Chapter 1 of this study stresses that the role of interface studies is to illustrate the interdependencies between education and other sectors (political, economic, social, and technological) in the formation of the future. Chapter 2 examines three case studies. The first, "Secondary Education: A National, Regional, and School Issue," reveals that secondary education in Australia provides a valuable but unfinished case study on the interaction between education and polity. The second, "Language, Education and Polity: A National Language Policy for Australia," emphasizes the problem created by the a diversity of language varieties that exist in Australia. The third, "Resource Planning, Addressing National Priorities through the Planned Allocation of Resources," identifies the interfaces, with budget allocations seen as the result of several forces: political, socio-cultural, economic, demographic, legal-governmental, and technological. A brief historical review of funding arrangements for education in Australia is provided and the role of the Commonwealth is investigated. The document concludes with attention to four scenarios for the future of resource planning in education. Six pages of references are appended. (RSL)

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Interface Between Education and State Policy: AUSTRALIA

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EDUCATION AND POLITY 2

Interface Between Education and State Policy: AUSTRALIA

Phillip Hughes
David Corson
Brian Caldwell

Studies:

- Secondary Education
- A National Language Policy
- Resource Planning

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IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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PREFACE

The APEID Interdisciplinary Meeting on Education within the Context of Alternative Futures (Bangkok, 2-8 November 1983) had recommended that the countries participating in it should be approached for making studies, in the context of futures, on interface of education with four areas, namely, communication; employment and leisure; state policy; and technology. The brief outline of such studies had been established jointly at the aforesaid Meeting. A fifth area was added on the recommendation of the Ninth Regional Consultation Meeting on APEID (Bangkok, March 1984) under the title 'education and urban development'.

Consequently, Unesco approached the participants of the Meeting to indicate their interest in undertaking interface studies as recommended.

The studies were then commissioned during 1984 and were conducted by interdisciplinary teams: two in Australia, two in India, one in Japan, one in Malaysia and one in the Republic of Korea. These seven studies are published in a series entitled "Education and Polity".

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the three authors of this study, who are staff members of Centre for Education, the University of Tasmania, and to the institutions which extended co-operation in the preparation of the study.

Contents

	Page
Chapter One : The role of interface studies	1
Chapter Two : Three case studies	3
Secondary education – a national, regional and school issue	3
Language, education and polity: a national language policy for Australia?	20
Resource planning : addressing national priorities through the planned allocation of resources	38
References	65

Chapter One

THE ROLE OF INTERFACE STUDIES

The place of the interface studies is to illustrate the interdependencies between education and other sectors, political, economic, social and technological, in the formulation of the future. The APEID meeting, *futures and Education* (APEID, 1984) indicated the need for futures studies designed for an educational perspective to be holistic in nature and to be based on an indepth analysis of the interfaces between education and other sectors.

The specific emphasis for the area, Education and Polity, is on the need for national unification, while taking account of the plurality of interests related to race, religion, language and social background. The thrust, then, is on issues which tend to transcend such barriers and become a national concern, and possibly a national priority.

The nations of the Asia and Pacific region have a special consciousness of the impact of change. In recent years, many have experienced major political changes and are also in the process of deciding how traditional culture and values should respond to social and technological change. In that situation, the requirement is not for an uncritical acceptance of change, whatever its source. Nor is it to reject change fearfully, nor to ignore it. What is needed is a combination of clarity and flexibility: clarity with respect to the values to be supported or developed; flexibility with respect to the responses by which this is done.

The issues of this interface study will be explored in three aspects of Australian education. The first is secondary education, where a national programme has been launched in order to meet current needs which are seen as having strong future implications. The second is national language policy, which has particular importance in a multi-language, multi-racial society. The third is resource planning, where national priorities in education have been identified and addressed through a complex set of special purpose arrangements which have seen funds channeled directly into schools in some instances to effect change at a local level.

The three areas dealt with in the following sections seem at first to be very different. They share a common emphasis, though expressed in diverse contexts. That emphasis is a move away from a traditional view, in which all key decision were made at the centre, to a more flexible position. That position does not determine in an arbitrary way that all decisions will be made centrally or that all decision will be made locally. Rather it approaches each decision on the basis of an analysis of the necessary background information and the appropriate participants. This analysis will determine the appropriate location of decision–making. This pattern is evident throughout the three studies.

Chapter Two

THREE CASE STUDIES

Secondary education – a national, regional and school issue

The current situation. The situation with respect to secondary education indicates the multiplicity of levels at which decisions are required. At the National Economic Summit in 1983, the Federal Government indicated its concern at the "unprecedented crisis for Australia's youth" (DEYA, 1983). The paper pointed out the severity of the unemployment situation for youth, the reduction in the number of full-time jobs, the increase in the period for the average length of unemployment and the reduction in the number of apprenticeships. It contrasted this with the surprising fact that retention in secondary education, which is very low on world standards had not increased in this period of increased unemployment.

Shortly afterwards the Government announced the development of a major new programme to meet this situation, the Participation and Equity Programme. The objectives of the programme were to:

a) assist schools to give a positive and effective education to all children, and to make substantial progress toward the more equal distribution of other outcomes of education such as individual's access to paid employment, and higher education;

b) assist schools respond effectively and appropriately to the diversity of Australian society;

c) assist and help shape economic recovery and development; and

d) restore the community's confidence in the national Government's determination to give all children access to properly staffed and equipped schools.

(News Release, 28 July, 1983)

The situation recognised by the Government's initiatives is one that has been given special urgency by the current unemployment figures but is not dependent exclusively upon them. It is part of a problem of much longer standing which now appears with much more dramatic emphasis. The Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission in May 1973 pointed to the deficiencies seen to exist, in the provision of resources, in the inequalities of opportunity provided, in the quality of education.

The work of the Schools Commission has itself contributed to an improvement in the first of these three deficiencies. In the other two, while much has been done, the same criticisms can still be made. Later Schools Commission reports take up these issues.

> A major conclusion of this study, however, is that in their general orientation most schools lag in their adjustment to the needs of the full range of students for the last two decades of the twentieth century. In saying this the Commission is not in any way subscribing to claims that high youth unemployment is a consequence of the failure of schools and schooling . . . But there is a general need for adjustment which is most obvious in the final compulsory years; that is, ages 15 and 16 years, although there are also serious implications for the final two years of secondary schooling. The challenge cannot be met, in the Commission's view, by anything less than a fundamental reappraisal of the approach to the compulsory years of schooling. The need has been there ever since secondary schooling to the end of Year 10 became a mass enterprise. High youth unemployment has heightened the urgency.

The situation identified in Australia was one which appeared in similar form in many countries. In the United States of America, a report was issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, a body set up by the Secretary of Education. The report was brief but stark in its statements.

> Our nation is at risk. The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity. If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament. History is not kind to idlers.

The Commission concluded:

> (the trend) stems more from weakness of purpose, confusion of vision, underuse of talent and lack of leadership than from conditions beyond our control.
>
> (Gardner, 1983)

Similar concerns have been expressed in Europe. Torsten Husen of Sweden, one of the most perceptive and experienced of European commentators, wrote his book, *The School in Question* at the conclusion of two seminars, one in Aspen, Colorado and one in Berlin.

> The 1960's was a decade of exponential growth of educational provision and school expenditures boosted by an almost euphoric belief in education. The 1970's has, under the influences of inflation and zero growth, witnessed a 'headlong retreat' from commitments to education. The school as an institution, particularly secondary school, has become the target of heavy criticism. Education has for some time been in a state of crisis of finance, confidence and raison d'etre. Evidently the 'crisis' . . . reflected institutional shortcomings, both internal and external. The latter pertain to how formal education is related to other institutions and to society at large, not least to the world of work.
>
> (Husen, 1979)

The breadth of the criticism of secondary education is important for us in Australia to recognise. The problems identified are not specifically Australian, even though they have their local forms. Nor are they problems relating to the school only. They are manifest in countries whose school systems differ from one another in quite fundamental ways.

If we accept this analysis, then the nature of the solutions sought must be different in kind than if the problems were seen as essentially school problems. The solutions must relate to schools as part of our social culture and will involve a re-consideration of the ways in which our society organises its whole approach to youth, not merely to their school experiences.

Social factors and education. A vital part of education's response to social change is a realistic analysis of that change, to determine what education *can* and *should* do. We identify here, briefly, some of the key factors to be included in such an analysis.

Unemployment. The situation may be illustrated by the changes for the 15-19 age-group. In 1972 for this age-group, 39 per cent were in full-time education, 44 per cent employed and 8 per cent unemployed (see *Earning and Learning*, CTEC, 1983). By 1976 the proportion of unemployed had risen to 13.9 per cent, by 1979 to 20.8 per cent, by 1982 to 26.3 per cent and by 1983 to 29.8 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics). As was mentioned also, the average duration of unemployment rose from 5.5 weeks in 1973 to 25 weeks in 1981. This is a grim prospect for young people, a prospect which fundamentally alters their attitude to the future, and also to the means by which they might prepare for the future, the schools.

Technological change. Unemployment, even of such a drastic nature, could be borne with more cheerfulness if it were seen as a temporary phenomenon, caused by and passing with a short-term economic recession. It seems unlikely that this is the case. Unemployment is linked partly, at least, with structural change, arising from new technology. The move identified by many writers from an industrial to a post-industrial society would imply the likelihood of a major disruption in industrial organisation and employment patterns. There is no guarantee of an easy return to full employment, particularly for the young.

The impact of the new information technologies, including computers, will clearly be a major one. It affects not only employment structures but also communication, expectations, perceived sources of authority, teaching approaches, . . . The list could continue. Clearly it will give a different shape to our society. It is still possible that we can decide the main features of that shape.

Transition to adulthood. Another aspect to change dramatically in our society is the process of transition from childhood to adulthood. For most of history, this was a relatively uncomplicated pattern in which family and communal living, through everyday experience, inducted children gradually into the patterns and activities of adulthood. It was only as change became more rapid that this

process ceased to work. With rapid social change, the cultural transitions between succeeding generations have grown more abrupt. This is still recent. Compulsory, universal primary education has been a reality in Western countries for a century. Public secondary education is still more recent, and we have endeavoured to provide universal secondary education for little more than thirty years. It is not surprising that secondary education has not yet adapted to a role where:

> The consequence of the expansion of the student role, and the action-poverty it implies for the young, has been an increased restiveness among the young. They are shielded from responsibility and they become irresponsible; they are held in a dependant status, and they come to act as dependants; they are kept away from productive work, and they become unproductive.
>
> (Coleman, 1972)

It is in the combination of a number of factors that the current situation for youth is so difficult. The increased period of study coincides with deferred responsibilities, with increased dependence, with reduced production and with increased expectations. This coincidence produces substantial tensions and dissatisfaction.

Security. In addition to the increase in violence on a small scale, including political terrorism, robbery, riots and rebellions, there is a profound uncertainty added to by the threat of nuclear war. People are conscious that their lives, their society, the world as they know it could end abruptly in an exchange of nuclear bombs, an exchange which may not be intended to involve them. This consciousness is particularly important for young people.

A recent study revealed that the majority of students in the age-group 15-17 believe there will be a nuclear war in their life-time while only a very small proportion felt that ordinary people could help to prevent it.

(Wilson, 1984)

Interdependence. We live in a world where no society can be autonomous or independent. This independence is precluded not only by war, but by economic factors, such as trade and the need for

resources. It is precluded by the fragility of the environment on which we all make an impact. Our future as individual societies is linked with our capacity to co-operate as a world society.

Long-term goals. In a world of such complexity, governments must make decisions in keeping with long-term goals as well as short-term benefits. To do so they must either force compliance or, in a participatory society, gain it through understanding and agreement. The latter approach requires a society with a well-developed understanding of major issues and a willingness to work together in resolving them.

The situation for secondary schools. Studies performed over the past decade in Australia show a surprisingly high level of agreement on perceived roles of secondary education. The Australian Education Review No. 16, *Where Junior Secondary Schools Are Heading,* (Collins and Hughes, 1982), surveyed 22 such studies carried out in Australia over the last ten years. There was a considerable consistency in the results, which may be summarised as follows:

a) Students, parents and teachers all agree in defining a broad scope for secondary education. The scope includes:

Basic skills – mathematics and communication

Health understanding – the requirements for healthy living

Personal development – the development of the individual

Social awareness – understanding of important social issues

Practical orientation – useful knowledge and skills

Socialization – relating effectively and easily with others

Academic orientation – the traditional academic subjects

Aesthetic orientation – interest in/feeling for the arts

To this list, Catholic schools added religious education. Other schools included it, but much less strongly.

b) The order listed above indicated the priority in terms of importance seen by the three groups.

c) The areas seen as achieved best, in relation to their importance were basic skills, socialization and academic orientation.

d) The areas seen as falling below the desired achievement level, in respect of assessed importance were health, personal development and social awareness, practical orientation and aesthetic orientation.

This would argue for a dual role for schools: an instrumental role, involving perceived usefulness to the individual both as an individual and as a member of society; a developmental role, which sees the person developing as an individual, and as one capable of playing a responsible role in society. It must be remembered, however, that schools need also to be seen as institutions in their own right, not only as preparatory places. The quality of the community life of a school is itself important.

Uncertainty revealed by retention patterns. Australia has a low retention pattern in secondary education with respect to other industrialized countries such as the United States of America, Japan, Canada and Switzerland; the Australian retention to Year 12 is of the order of 37-40 per cent, but the countries above have retention rates of twice that amount. The low retention pattern appears first at the Grade X-XI transition: the 90 per cent who remain to Grade X drop to half that figure in Grade XI. Up to 1973, there was an increasing rate of participation, and the increasing unemployment rate seemed only to add to that participation. After 1974, the pattern recessed: as unemployment increased, the retention rate to senior secondary education, and to higher education, actually decreased. The uncertainty in employment seems to have had the effect of reducing the perceived value of staying at school during this period. In fact, of course, while the association may have weakened there is still a substantial link between employment prospects and more schooling: in 1981 in the figures of those unemployed for twenty-six weeks or more, 57 per cent were Year 8 leavers, 30 per cent were Year 10 leavers, 15 per cent were Year 12 leavers. This situation is not often realised by school leavers. However, it must also be stressed that longer school participation does not create more jobs. The problem of unemployment will remain.

Problems with satisfaction and motivation. A substantial change occurs at the primary-secondary interface. A large majority

express satisfaction with school at the primary level. In the early secondary years, the level of expressed dissatisfaction increases substantially. In a South Australian investigation in 1980 dissatisfaction expressed at Year 10 level amounted to 50 per cent of students, citing either moderate or severe dissatisfaction. Those figures were similar to those expressed by 1970 Year 10 students (Power, 1983).

One reason for the increased dissatisfaction has already been pursued. It is the enlargement of the student role to constitute the major activity of youth, in contrast to learning by experience or activity perceived as productive. When high unemployment is added to this situation, it becomes very difficult for many students to see the point of lengthy studies.

Increased retention: Necessary but not sufficient. There is a temptation to see increased retention as a benefit in itself. Certainly it would reduce the high youth unemployment. It is not a sufficient answer to the situation, however. If schooling is to help with the causes of the problem, and not merely with its symptoms, then the time spent in further education must be seen by all students as a satisfying and useful commitment.

Education *can* give increased skills, greater knowledge and more understanding. These aspects are all of value to the individual and to society. They must be seen to be so in a way that currently does not happen for a substantial proportion. Any new programme then, such as PEP, requires more fundamental purposes than simply to increase retention rates: the value of the additional experience must be its final justification.

What responses are appropriate? Australian education tradition has been committed to the concept that educational decisions are best made centrally at the state level. There have been many initiatives which have altered that concept. One was the concept of school-based decision-making, particularly with respect to the curriculum. This came from the feeling that central decisions on curriculum depended for their effectiveness on the nature and quality of interchange in individual classrooms. This view saw the teacher as the key agent in curriculum implementation and thus as having a proper role in curriculum design.

A further concept of importance has been that of involvement of the community in education. Many Australian schools have

worked hard to develop effective and meaningful links with their community, not only to enhance communication flow but to encourage shared decision-making. In some places this effort has involved the development of school boards or councils, in other places it has taken other forms. It has enhanced the importance of the individual school in both instances. The development of national bodies such as the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre also strengthened the role of individual schools. Their provision of funding to individual schools as well as systems for such initiatives as the innovations programme, the disadvantaged schools programme, or schools evaluations has heightened the initiative of schools.

At the same time, all Australian states have made substantial moves to regionalise the administration of education. Education regions now play a substantial role in professional development, in staffing schools and in the provision of services and facilities. There are thus at least four levels of operation and of decision-making in Australian education, the school, the region, the state and the nation. Institutions of higher education also play a significant role, in research and development, in initial preparation and in staff development. At all levels mentioned, the nature of the involvement is much broader and more interactive. Thus, at the school level, where once the principal played the key role in decisions, there is in some schools an involvement of parents, teachers and, frequently, students. Any solutions developed for secondary education will be useful and workable to the extent they recognise the need for broad and deep interaction in Australian education.

Decisions at the national level. The likelihood that the pace of change will continue is very high. The major conclusion for the schools to make from this thinking is that current problems, far from disappearing, may be expected to become more acute. Technological change will continue, with its contingent effects on employment. Other changes of equal importance to society will occur. We cannot expect the difficulties which have arisen for schools to be solved merely by the passing of time, but only by substantial and well-directed effort. That effort needs to involve the schools but must be more widely based. It will involve the development of a youth policy which takes account of the complex economic and social situation.

The Commonwealth Government announced in July 1983 its establishment of the Standing Committee on Youth Policies, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Youth Affairs. The task of the Standing Committee is to co-ordinate all Commonwealth policies, programmes and proposals to the extent that they effect youths. The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs (MEYA), Senator Susan Ryan, announced the intention of the Government to:

a) rationalise the various schemes of income support for young people; and

b) relate education and training to changing social, economic and technological conditions.

(MEYA, 1983)

The announcement of the Participation and Equity Programme was in the context of this stated intention.

An important aspect of the Government action to implement this policy will lie in the rationalisation of various schemes of income support. As has been indicated in many studies, there is a large array of allowances and support schemes. Edwards in her paper, *A Youth Allowance: The Issues* identifies the following categories:

a) Major Commonwealth Programmes of Cash Assistance to or for Young People, 11 programmes involving 3 different departments;

b) Other Commonwealth Programmes of Some Relevance, 14 programmes through 2 departments.

(Edwards, 1983)

The problem is not just that there is a large number of support programmes, but rather that they are not co-ordinated, may overlap or conflict with one another, and may also conflict with other aspects of Government policy. Edwards points out that the confusion of programmes may give rise to inequities on one hand, or unintentional incentives or disincentives on the other hand. The most obvious case of the former is where students within one tertiary institution could be receiving a wide variety of different benefits, even though their needs may be quite similar. A perverse disincentive

is instanced by the cases where a young person ineligible for the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS), qualifies for unemployment benefits. They do so, either by dropping out of education or by proceeding at a sufficiently slow pace to retain eliaibility for Unemployment Benefits.

This situation has led many commentators to recommend not only a rationalisation of payments to young people but also a single youth allowance. Wilenski argues the case for giving some priority to youth in social planning since he sees that it is the most disadvantaged groups of young people who receive least from society in the way of education and who bear the brunt of unemployment, not merely in numbers but in duration of unemployment and in having the poorest prospects of emerging from it. He indicates that while specific disadvantages such as lack of qualifications, lack of job contacts and networks, and race and sex discrimination, need to be tackled directly, that youth allowances are an important tool of policy (Wilenski, 1983). Wilenski continues by putting forward three models for allowances:

1. A universal allowance to all young people;
2. A modified version at a lower level of allowance; and
3. A restricted model focusing on needier individuals and groups.

A suggestion of a different kind was made by Dahrendorf, who indicated that some form of universal community service may be required to take account in a positive way of the effects of youth employment.

> . . . I believe that we have to rethink the way in which people's lives are organised in our societies. I think that ultimately, we are very unlikely indeed to come to grips with the problem of unemployment if we do not invite people, ask people, to give a portion of their time to the society, to the community in which they are living. By that I mean, quite unambiguously, that we may well come to realise that we need some sort of community service which is given by every person, not necessarily at the age of 18 – perhaps at some stage between 18 and 30 – not in barracks but with the maximum of freedom.
>
> (Dahrendorf in AAAE*, 1978)

* Australian Association for Adult Education

From the points made earlier, it is clear that solutions can not be found to the most pervasive problems entirely within education. Such fundamental reconsiderations as those mentioned here may well be a part of a national response.

Decisions at the regional (state) level. An important part of an approach to the problems identified for education and training, is to identify and clarify the appropriate roles of schools. It would be unfair to expect schools to contribute to solutions wi hout indicating clearly the part they might play. As shown earlier, there is in fact a much greater level of agreement about the nature and purposes of schools than is usually recognised. It should be possible in the present situation to indicate some major features about the secondary curriculum on which agreement might be established. One important point to establish is that schools are not concerned only with preparation for vocations, even interpreting this in the broadest way, but that they have a threefold task.

1. Preparation for vocations;
2. Preparation for citizenship in a democratic society; and,
3. Preparation for personal cultivation.

It is clear in the Australian context that the great majority of students will continue on from Year 10 right through to Year 12. The shape of the curriculum for the six years from Year 7-12 thus becomes of great importance, and the role it has to play becomes more crucial. Decisions are required at the regional level, which in Australia is the state level, on the shape of this curriculum.

Perhaps the major decision to be made relates to the possibility of a common curriculum. A possibility suggested in many quarters has been to remove from secondary education the 'substantial majority' of whom Sir Keith Joseph spoke, for whom the present system made 'inadequate provision'. This may be one of the most fundamental questions of all, not just for our schools but for our whole society. Asked in another way, the questions put is whether we want to recognise formally, through education, the existence of two classes of citizens. This is a question to which our society has already answered 'No', in turning from selective to comprehensive secondary education. It is being asked again because of the problems secondary education has encountered in being truly comprehensive.

In spite of those problems, it seems no more defensible now than it did three decades ago, to separate one group for special advantage and to leave the rest to be second-class citizens.

Two aspects are important in considering what should be the common curriculum, the education to be available for the total school population. The first aspect relates to the higher expectations that a democratic society has for all its citizens. It expects them to undertake the full responsibilities of citizenship: voting intelligently, taking an interest in political issues, understanding and supporting the legal system, taking responsibilities within the community. It expects them to undertake vocational responsibilities: preparing themselves for employment, developing appropriate skills and attitudes, making career choices at appropriate times. It expects them to develop as individuals, with a sense of self-respect, accepting the legitimate rights of others, being able to get on with others, having a range of cultural interests, developing a consistent and acceptable moral code. It is a formidable range of expectations, but it is what is meant by being a responsible citizen in a democratic society.

The second aspect is relevant to choices on the common curriculum. This concerns the possibilities made available by technology. These begin with relatively simple developments such as calculators. With these, a wide range of arithmetical skills performed with complete accuracy becomes available to all: the implication of this availability is that an understanding of how to use such computation becomes more important. Similarly, information is now available from more sources than print, the church, the parent, and the schools. There is a flood of information, via radio and television and through recordings of many topics.

What becomes important is the capacity to assess the value of information, to judge its relevance, to use it effectively and efficiently in making decisions. The computer opens up still further levels of possibilities; in providing access to information throughout the world, in storing and analysing information, in solving problems. In this area as in the others, a capacity for performing immense quantities of lower-level skills, places an increased value on higher-level skills and on affective, aesthetic and moral decisions which can only be made by humans.

The expectations of society, the possibilities through technology – these combine to make important for each individual the

choices to be made through life: intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual. This constitutes the new basics; what is essential to us in being full participants in a democratic society.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate in the United Kingdom stated what they saw as being the desirable common curriculum.

> We see that common curriculum as a body of skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge, to be pursued at a depth appropriate to their ability, by all pupils in the compulsory years of secondary education for a substantial part of their time, perhaps as much as two-thirds or three-quarters of the total time available. The remainder would be used either to deepen understanding of studies already in hand, or to undertake new activities, or both.

They defined the areas of experience for the common curriculum:

- the aesthetic and creative
- the ethical
- the linguistic
- the mathematical
- the physical
- the scientific
- the social and political
- the spiritual

(H.M. Inspectorate, 1981).

The justification of a common curriculum lies essentially in the aims of society, its aims for itself and its aims for its individual members. To say this, of course, is merely to state a beginning. Such a curriculum must be built anew; built on the current strengths in our schools, for that is where it must succeed; built on the felt needs and interests of its students. Their involvement in a process designed to make them valuable members of a democratic society must be genuine and substantial.

The concept of a common curriculum for Years 7-10 does not necessarily mean a uniform curriculum. As Musgrave pointed out,

the existence in the Australian population of a variety of different sub-groups, implies that if pupils are to reach a common basis,

> the content and pedagogy of the core curriculum must vary in some respects for the various constituent groups of Australian society.
>
> (Musgrave, 1984)

In addition, however, the existence of a common curriculum for Years 7-10 frees up the options for Years 11 and 12. The argument for a separate treatment for this age-grouping are now strong. (See Anderson et al, 1980.) There is a good case for a variety of vocational strands, including academic preparation for higher education, to be available at this level. This implies the need for strong links with institutions of technical education.

Decisions at the school level. It is in the experience of students in individual schools, that the possibilities of a more satisfying and more effective curriculum will be tested. It is encouraging that there are successful approaches in Australian secondary schools to many of the aspects where we have identified concern. The Participation and Equity Programme can build on existing strengths in seeking to achieve its dual sets of purposes. These existing strengths provide starting points from which schools can expand their current efforts.

Regardless of what is done at the national and state level, unless schools are able to make increased retention a valued and valuable activity, the other initiatives will be insufficient. The efforts in this area must be built on what is known about 'good schools'. There is a continuing tendency for our interests in education to be pathological in nature, to concentrate on the 'problems' of standards of performance in literacy and numeracy, absenteeism, vandalism, disruptive students, alienation, lack of public support, and so on. This is as much a distortion as it is to describe a person in terms of illnesses suffered and physical defects. In our physical condition, health is not a mere absence of illness but a positive condition of well-being. So, too, a good school is not one with an absence of problems, but has a number of positive characteristics.

The nature of the concept, 'good school' is important. In thinking of much simpler creations, a knife or a car, the concept of a

good knife or a good car is not a unitary idea. 'Good for what?', is the obvious question. A good car to traverse the Sahara Desert is different from one to compete in the Le Mans circuit, and both differ from a good car in Tokyo traffic. Thus, a school may be good from a number of points of view. Researchers in a number of countries are working both to clarify and to extend and deepen the concept. The work of Frymier and others (Frymier et al, 1984) and Goodlad (Goodlad, 1984) in the U.S.A., Rutter and others (Rutter et al, 1979) in Europe, Caldwell and others (Misko, 1985) in Australia illustrates both the breadth of interest and the merging coherence of views on the topic.

The Frymier study derived a checklist, as a consequence of a major effort to define, clarify and develop and concept.

> The following checklist has been prepared as a possible departure point for a school's self-assessment or toward a definition of the characteristics of a good school.

Some earmarks of a good school

1. The school is part of a community-wide education programme, with well-defined bridges for co-operation with other schools, school levels, and community educational programmes.

2. School goals are sufficiently comprehensive, balanced, realistic, and understood, and they permeate the activities of the school.

3. The school has, and exercises considerable responsibility for, programme planning by its own personnel within the policies and regulations set by its control group.

4. School climate is friendly, good-humoured, busy, and members of the school faculty and staff generally regard their work as challenging and satisfying.

5. A variety of teaching modes and resources are used as appropriate to instructional purposes.

6. Student performance toward all school goals is evaluated as regularly and fully as needed or possible and is generally regarded as satisfactory.

7. Students participate fully and enthusiastically in the wide variety of activities provided by the school and community.

8. Parents and other citizens of the school community participate fully and enthusiastically in the opportunities provided for their involvement in the educational programme.

9. The library and other learning skills centres widely and effectively used by students.

10. The school programme provides, at its level, for the natural progression of learners from dependent, other-directed learning to independent, self-directed learning.

11. The school principal is a generally liked and respected leader who leads and collaborates effectively in school and community projects.

This bears a strong similarity to the criteria developed in the Australian study, which began from a quite different starting point. In 1984/85 the Participation and Equity Programme is funding many schools throughout Australia in a deliberate effort to recognise their positive capacities to meet the needs of students. This does not involve merely increasing the retention of students in schools, but seeking to ensure that they find that continuation is valuable to them. The experiences from these schools will be of tremendous value in providing answers as to how students can be helped to face current and future challenges.

In summary. Secondary education in Australia provides a valuable but unfinished case study on the interaction between education and polity. The problems of education arise from social, economic and technological factors. Their resolution is one of the most pressing needs for the development of a healthy society for the future.

We see here clearly the interplay of a variety of factors. Unemployment results from changing economic and technological circumstances. High youth unemployment exacerbates public feelings of concern about schooling, and raises in students strong doubts as to the instrumental value of education. Yet the future development of a healthy society depends on the work schools can do in producing a more politically understanding population, with more flexible

skills and a willingness both to adapt to changing circumstances and to adhere to values adopted by society generally. In this interface between the present and the future, reflection and action are required at a number of levels, national, regional and local and in a number of spheres, in politics, in economics and in education. No single definitive set of answers is likely to emerge but what can be hoped for is a better capacity to understand past and present, and to shape the future.

Language, education and polity: a national language policy for Australia?

The problem. There is a diversity of language varieties in Australia. In September 1984 an Australian newspaper reported that a group of Uzbeks from Central Asia is living in Adelaide. They speak no English. There are no suitable teaching materials for them in schools. The State Minister for Education points out that no Uzbek-English dictionary exists. There is no Uzbek literature in Australia, no translation or interpreter services. This tiny group of Australians is denied access by their language to true participation in national polity.

Figures released by the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs estimate that of first generation residents from non-English speaking countries there are in total 1,326,833 speakers of 36 languages, each with more than 1,000 speakers in Australia. In addition, there are 106,000 first generation speakers of more than 90 other languages each with fewer than 1,000 speakers in Australia, and 27,000 Aborigines, including creoles, speaking various indigenous languages. The Secretary further revealed that one quarter of Australia's population have an immediate personal and family interest in a language other than English and in a culture outside the British tradition.

It is now admitted in Australia that the nation has never been culturally homogeneous. This myth arose early in Australia's history growing from a false belief that seemed necessary to hold at that time; that *national* unity somehow depends on having *cultural* unity:

> Australia has not been a homogeneous society since 1788. When the 'British Invasion' arrived on these shores the existing Aboriginal inhabitants had developed a social system with an estimated three hundred languages (this does not include differences of dialect). The first fleets arrived adding a variety

> of ethnic, religious, class and language styles to the continent. Each succeeding wave of immigrants from this period added to this social diversity or cultural heterogeneity. However a cultural myth has existed in Australia concerning the social structure of the population. Populist mythology talked of a classless, homogeneous society, and this belief was embedded in schooling practice. The conviction coexisted with, and was supported by, the policies of Australian governments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in legislating a 'White Australia Policy' as the basis for immigration laws. Generations of Australian children were schooled in the belief of an Australia for whites only. As a nation we were educated with the values of an Anglo-British society, within an island separated by distance – geographical and social. As a people we were unprepared for the massive immigration (particularly after World War II) and the subsequent infusion of diverse cultures and population changes within Australian society.
>
> (Claydon, King & Rado, pp. 43-33)

Obviously severe problems exist in Australia for the large minority groups who continue to use languages other than English. According to the 1976 Census the following languages are spoken regularly, each by at least 45,000 Australians: Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Spanish and the several languages of Yugoslavia. Chinese, spoken in 1976 by some 30,000 Australians, no doubt has joined this list, given the increased Indo-Chinese refugee intake into Australia. Yet as diverse as this list is, it misses many of the problem areas created by language diversity in Australia. Figure 1. Languages of Australia (Horvath, 1981), suggests some of the problems associated merely with identifying the range of languages in use. The diagram does not exhaust the languages in use, but makes it clear that language issues in Australia extend beyond mere problems of contact between English and non-English immigrant languages.

There is evidence now for the existence of quite different varieties of English in Australia. In the community at large there is still a great lack of awareness of the possibility of such differences. There is still a strong tendency to regard non-standard English forms, for example, as errors in people's speech, the result of carelessness, little schooling or bad teaching. Eagleson, a Professor of English, sets out the background to the problem:

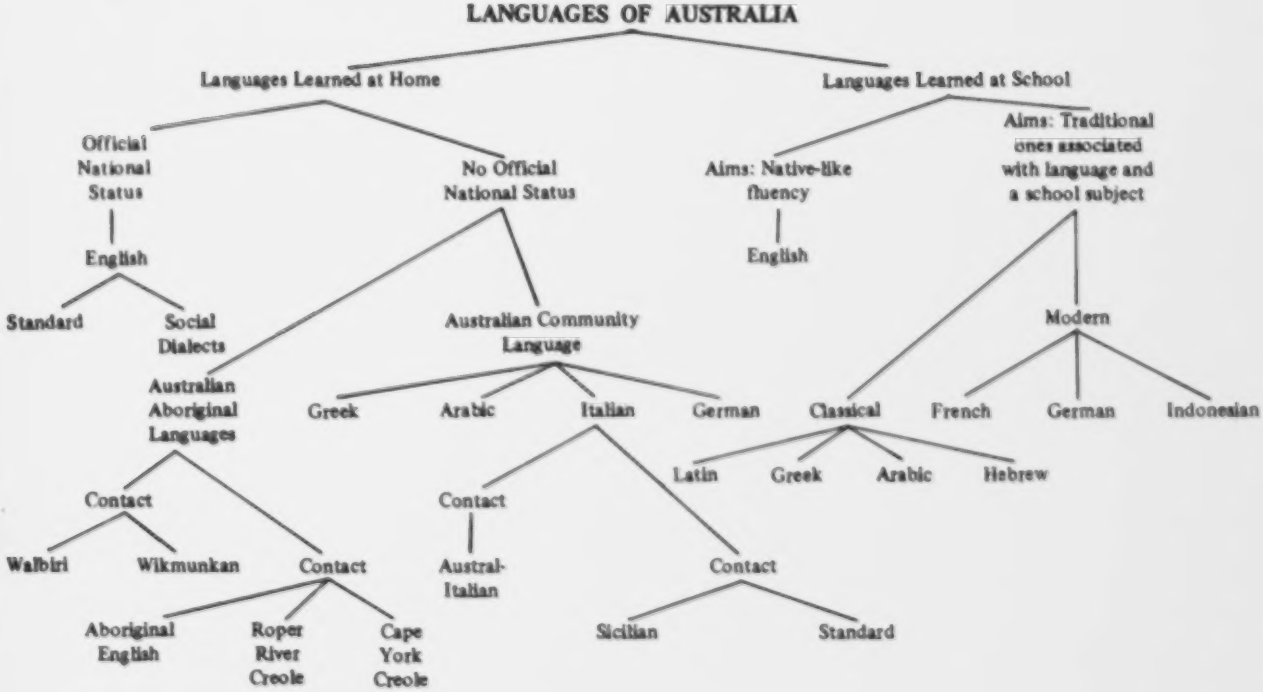

Figure 1: Languages of Australia

> Many children entering our schools come with a language different from that of their teachers. It is the language of their parents and their peers, and it is thoroughly ingrained and continually being reinforced by constant exposure to it. I have found a large number of teachers who do not appreciate the situation confronting them. They regard their pupils as speakers of bad English, and they see their task as a war against error. When their efforts seem fruitless they come to regard any work in language with their pupils as nigh on hopeless. Worse still, by their attitudes to certain language habits, as well as having lower levels of expectation for their pupils, they frequently promote an antipathy between the school and the child to the detriment of the education of the child. The problem at the moment is that we have too little factual information to offer the teacher to bring him tangible aid.
>
> (Eagleson 1976, p. 25)

We find in the studies of Eagleson (1976 and 1984) some preliminary evidence for nonstandard dialects of Australian English. His concern though is with the more superficial aspects of grammar and style. Studies in England and Australia (Corson 1983 and 1985) examine the more educationally important and deeper level semantic differences that exist in the English language use of children from different social backgrounds. The evidence is clear: children from different social backgrounds are very different in the English language they are ready to put into use in schools. The following summary points out the source of these linguistic differences that seem to interfere with school success, especially for children from low income families both in England and in Australia:

In explaining the relative language weaknesses of the children of low income families, Corson, 1985, argues that the life experiences of poor children give them a different conceptual development from their earliest years. They develop world views or conceptual frameworks which are different from those of other children who are favoured by better life opportunities and richer experiences. As a result the complex language forms necessary for success in secondary education are not readily assimilated into those conceptual frameworks. Relative to other children they are less ready to put into words the complex ideas necessary for school success.

On another plane, there are the enduring language problems that exist for the indigenous peoples of Australia, whether they remain users of their own languages or not. Bilingual programmes, in English and in one or other of the many Aboriginal languages, are a common feature of education in parts of Australia. It has been estimated that there are presently some 50,000 speakers of traditional Aboriginal languages, some spoken only by a handful of people in certain contexts. There are in addition around 16,000 speakers of Aboriginal Kriol as well as an unknown number of speakers of Aboriginal English. For example, most of the Aborigines resident at settlements at Ngukurr (Roper River) and Bamyili (near Katherine) in the Northern Territory speak a contact vernacular which they refer to as 'Pidgin English'. The language has become creolised, being the first language for the younger people, and usual the language of communication for the older people. Similar creoles appear to be spoken in a wide area in cattle station areas of the Northern Territory; while the forms may not be identical, these creoles appear to be highly mutually intelligible (Sharpe and Sandfur, 1976). Aboriginal language communities are scattered across Australia, although a large proportion of the Aboriginal population (43 per cent in 1976) is located in the south east of the continent, with more than 10 per cent living in Sydney.

Government involvement in language issues to 1984. Until very recently Commonwealth Government involvement in 'language planning' had given priority to setting up and maintaining programmes to teach English as a second language to migrants and to a lesser extent to Aborigines. The dominance of English as the language of the Australian community had been unchallenged. It was supported by the prominence of English in the international arena and by Australia's reliance for its political, economic and cultural intercourse upon other English-speaking countries. Nor was there any recognition at government level that different varieties of English itself, in use within Australia, might affect the rights and civic opportunities of their users: their access to participation in Australian polity.

The post-war migration programme, which brought 3.5 million migrants and refugees to Australia, has been largely responsible for a change in attitudes. Policies of cultural assimilation, whether deliberate or accidental, had not produced the homogeneity expected; English did not entirely displace other languages, particularly in the

private lives of migrants and their children. In 1973 a reforming government announced a new direction for Australian polity:

> It was in recognition of the great changes in Australian society and also of the suppressed diversity of previous years that in 1973 . . . the new doctrine of the multicultural society was proclaimed on behalf of the then government. It was taken up as a policy by the state governments of Australia and continued by the present national administration. It was part of Australia's quest for independence and a new political and cultural awareness of itself. It followed the great break with the traditional 'melting pot' theory of the United States of America where assimilation over three centuries has wiped out languages, cultures, heritages and created tensions . . .
>
> (Grassby 1983, p. 3)

In 1977 a conservative Australian Prime Minister also publicly endorsed bilingualism for all Australians and endowed bilingual programmes, community language promotion and English as a second language (ESL) services with special funds. Translation and interpreting services received more support. Multicultural television and ethnic broadcasting were established. Community attitudes were sampled by opinion polls and were found to be highly favourable in supporting community language learning. However the response to these initiatives within education itself has been relatively slight and has been realised against considerable difficulties.

The desire from government for expansion of effort in the language areas in schools came at a time of financial contraction in education. By 1981, for example, New South Wales, Australia's largest state education system, found difficulty in obtaining 30 bilingual teachers for experimental programmes. Larger class sizes and heavier teaching loads for teachers have made it difficult for innovations to be introduced, even for mother tongue teaching in English. Government policies at every level have risked duplication, confusion and perfunctoriness:

> Yet community language programmes, bilingual programmes, ESL programmes and adult literacy programmes are being introduced without proper planning, without clear aims and without any guarantee that the methods and materials used are capable of realising any worthwhile aims. Even some of the

> most carefully supervised programmes run by government agencies . . . come nowhere near the minimum requirements laid down . . . We do not know whether we should teach languages for transition or maintenance, and whether our resources are adequate for either. The picture of the present situation is one of confusion, ad hocery, waste, frustration and even misery. For these reasons a national policy and planning programme is necessary.
>
> (Kerr 1983, p. 122)

A Co-ordinated national language policy. Present language planning efforts, then, represent in many cases ad hoc responses to needs as they become identified. For example, the development of programmes for interpreters and translators has moved ahead of the complementary development of training courses; community language courses have been developed without planned continuity within the curriculum; adult literacy and adult migrant literacy arrangements have often depended on voluntary and untrained teachers who are unable to move students beyond the basics and who leave them stranded at an elementary level of development.

Moreover Australia's failure to develop bilingualism in numbers of its citizens is now showing up to the nation's cost. Most of the 17 cultural agreements with other countries entered into since 1968 make specific reference to the desirability of learning each other's language, and a significant proportion of Australia's overseas aid at present takes the form of teaching English. However, contact with other countries has led to an increased awareness of the limitations of transactions conducted through translation into English: the overwhelming majority of the world's population neither understands nor speaks English, and for most of those who learn English as a foreign language, it remains precisely that. As a result language skills are rapidly becoming important national resources for Australia. It is vital that policy development in this area is co-ordinated with policy concerning language and communication within Australia.

The Commonwealth Department of Education took an initiative in the late 1970's in establishing a working group on language policy. This group investigated the following areas: existing policies and programmes; overseas attempts at language planning; community attitudes and opinions on language as expressed in the media;

statistics on the extent of language teaching in Australia; language needs in the area of international communication; recent research on language development and language learning; and issues concerning the relationship between language and thought. From this working group came a paper arguing that there is a need to consider and develop policies on the use and maintenance of migrant languages, and policies on the support and extension of Aboriginal languages that are both internally consistent with existing policies on English and take cognisance of Australia's total communication needs at local, national and international levels. Such a co-ordinated set of policies on language matters amounts to a national language policy. Kerr outlines the limits, the directions and the risks inherent in such a policy:

> A national policy, in any area of endeavour, identifies needs and resources, sets goals, develops strategies to match resources to needs, sets up a mechanism to do what is necessary, and gets on with planning. Nations the world over do it with resources both natural and human.
>
> A national language policy would identify national needs for language, survey the resources available, identify the role of language in general and of individual languages in particular in the life of the nation, establish strategies that are necessary to manage and develop language resources, and relate all these to the best interests of the nation through the operation of an appropriate planning authority.
>
> Such a policy should be comprehensive, taking all relevant information into account, and it must endeavour to be consistent, so that one aspect of it does not work against others. It must also be founded on and consistent with other social goals which the society sets for itself, and it must be acceptable to the population. Language policies that run against the perceptions of the population are prescriptions for conflict.
>
> Language planning is really the implementation and prosecution phase of a language policy. Language planning is the phase that engenders sustained conflict if the measures are inadequate or unacceptable.
>
> (Kerr 1983, p. 117)

In response to developments, in 1982 the Australian Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts undertook a public inquiry into a new reference: 'The Development and Implementation of a Co-ordinated Language Policy for Australia'. The Chairman of the Committee indicated that the Committee's new reference was a reflection of the great needs, use and teaching of language and languages in Australia. Ethnic communities' support for the use of community languages, support for the maintenance of Aboriginal languages, the teaching of foreign languages and the fundamental importance of English in Australian society were all expected to be features of the inquiry.

The Committee concluded its programme of public hearings in October 1983. The drafting of the Report has taken considerable time, owing to the complexity and wide scope of the reference. During the course of the inquiry the Committee received 240 submissions, one of which was written in Walmajarri, an Aboriginal language of the north east of Western Australia. The Committee received public evidence from 94 witnesses, and the transcript of its proceedings totalled 2,393 pages.

Production and release of the Senate Committee's Report on a National Language Policy was delayed in late 1984 by the calling of a federal election for both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. It is now expected that the Report will be available to the public in 1985.

The background to an Australian language policy. Language in education and society is one of the issues that might be addressed in a language policy report. Language is a social phenomenon through which cultural groups develop ideas and transmit meanings. Language goes beyond a mere communicative function though. Since languages embody the different meaning potentials of cultures and sub-cultures they are the means by which cultural values, modes of thought and world views are passed across generations. By learning the languages of other cultures we allow ourselves a glimpse of the realities of those cultures, an insight which is denied to the monolingual person: intercultural understanding is fostered.

We know that children's differences in mother tongue language ability, more than any other observable factor, affect their potential

for success in schooling. It is clear that achievement in schools is highly dependent on the child's ability to 'display' knowledge. This display most often takes the form of spoken or written language. Child language will often be the first contact teachers have on which opinions of student potential can be based; in the closing stages of schooling, language contact through formal and informal assessments is often the only link between students and those assessors who finally declare a child's educational fate.

Nor is it an artifical or improper matter that 'language on display' is the central achievement of school success. A school curriculum is a selection of knowledge from the culture: all those things in the culture considered worth passing on through schooling. The chief item of knowledge in any culture is its language. The chief object of the school is to encourage the mastery of the language of the culture, since without this mastery children are denied power and influence over their own affairs and an opportunity for success in education.

Horvath draws attention to language as a social justice issue, claiming that "both sides" of the social justice issue are of concern in Australia (1980). On one side of the issue much research has been done which would indicate that migrant children are not doing well in school. We know from long experience that non-migrant poorer working class children in English-speaking countries also have a much lower success rate than their peers, and research has linked this low success rate to language as a mediating factor. By and large the children of migrants and the children of the poor are not performing well in school. On the other side of the social justice issue, the right to maintain one's own language and culture has received attention by Australian researchers: a community of speakers needs to be maintained for a language to survive and for the cultural traits, which it embeds, to continue.

English as mother tongue. Although it has no formal status as such, English clearly has a central position in Australian social life: it is the language of laws and parliamentary debate, the primary language of commerce and industry, of public administration and of education and technology. For most Australians (about 80 per cent) it is the mother tongue, spoken with fluency and used in every context of social intercourse. However, there are at least two groups of Australians who are without physical or intellectual handicap but

yet who experience handicaps to a varying degree in putting their mother tongue into use.

In common with many developed countries, in the early 1970s, Australia discovered that in spite of a long history of compulsory education there were many Australian-born members of the community who could not read and write, or could do so only at a functionally inadequate level. Research across Australia, but in particular in Sydney and Tasmania, found that as many as 10 to 15 per cent of Australian-born adults were functionally illiterate. Large scale programmes have been attempted in all parts of Australia to overcome this situation, which many regard as an indictment on the various educational systems in the country. These programmes have had some success, even though they have been unco-ordinated across sectors and government departments, and inadequately staffed and funded. An Australian Council for Adult Literacy was established in the late 1970s to facilitate communication between literacy practitioners and those interested in developing a more literate society in Australia. The Council also had as its functions the task of soliciting funds from government agencies and the running of an annual conference. The work of the Council continues, as does the work of the many adult literacy co-ordinators and their mainly volunteer helpers across the country, however a firm government commitment to supporting the work, either at federal or state levels, has not been expressed in financial terms: it remains the case that few governments are prepared to highlight ongoing programmes which point up ongoing deficiencies in their education systems.

Very recent research perhaps partly explains the existence of so many 'marginally-educated' adults in contemporary Australia. According to a series of studies there is the strong suggestion that Australian school systems might be failing the children of the poor, who use non-standard varieties of Australian English, before they have had the opportunity to show their real potential. The 'poor' refers to both the Anglo-Australian poor and the many poor members of the Aboriginal community. A research study examining the language strengths and weaknesses indicates that the children of the poor, at fifteen years, matched with their peers in educational background and in non-verbal reasoning skill, are not ready developmentally to meet what for many of them are their final formal assessments in education. In every educational (Corson, 1985)

setting children from poor family backgrounds show little development in their active vocabulary range from 12 to 15 years. The same samples of 15 year old children fared badly in their Year 10 examinations in English, Science, Maths, History and Geography.

There are strategies available through schooling which might gradually reduce problems for some in unrestrained access to standard Australian English as a mother tongue. These strategies cover the full school curriculum from pre-school to secondary. A National Language Policy would address itself to these strategies and to policies of broader social reform aimed at removing gross economic inequalities that might limit access to language itself.

English as a second language. There has been continued and expanding government support for ESL programmes, as the prime objective of Commonwealth government language policy. It is clear that without English a person stands little chance of competing with other Australians for society's rewards. English also provides the lingua franca which allows interaction between different cultural groups, thereby allowing a cohesive multicultural society.

Current issues, in such a well-established government offering, centre upon specific details of efficiency rather than upon more general matters. A national policy would provide a catalyst for co-ordination, without infringing the autonomy of established programmes. The following are matters that require considered attention and policy advice:

1. the extent and duration of support that should be given to ESL learners. Some research suggests that even at tertiary level students with ESL backgrounds, who are fluent in English, experience difficulties in certain contexts and styles.

2. the timing for introducing young migrant children to ESL courses. Since first language development and its associated cognitive growth extends well into the primary years there is a good case for providing education in the child's first language alongside ESL programmes.

3. the determination of the language needs of ESL learners, both adults and children. The contexts and the functions of language that must receive priority in courses of training are likely to be very idiosyncratic. Even children in schools have differing needs for

their English depending upon their own experiences, their own first languages and the school curriculum that engages them.

4. the evaluation of ESL programmes. Consultation is needed between agencies and a policy body both on the assessment of new arrivals and on the evaluation of ESL courses provided for them.

5. the role of Australia as a regional centre for the learning of English as a second language. A constant review of present offerings is required to discover whether or not they are appropriate to contemporary needs within Australia's world region and whether or not they are serving to promote a fuller understanding of Australia and its way of life within that region.

6. the co-ordination of the roles of radio and television in supplying ESL programmes.

Language and cognition. Educational thinkers have long recognised the importance of language development for cognitive growth. Language is the principal vehicle for symbolising thought. Current insights suggest an additional significance for language in children's cognitive development: intellectual development is fostered when exploration and discovery is accompanied by the verbal articulation of experience. Bruner, the cognitive psychologist, bases his views upon wide empirical evidence and rich contacts with children in learning situations. In summary his conclusions are: that intellectual growth is characterised by increasing independence of response from the immediate nature of the stimulus, an independence made possible by the mediating role of language; that growth depends on the development of an internal storage and information processing system which can describe reality; that intellectual development involves an increasing capacity to say what one has done and what one will do; that systematic interactions between a tutor and a learner facilitate cognitive development; and that language is the key to intellectual growth. These insights and others in similar vein have heavily influenced recent curriculum statements. Emphasis is placed on such matters as building on the language the child brings to school, the primacy of oral communication and the importance of constant in-depth usage as the way a child learns the patterns of language. It follows that effective education demands an environment that is rich in learning opportunities using open and motivated

discussion. Key issues then for a national language policy are: the place of initial schooling using the child's home language; the status granted in schools to the child's mother tongue; and the stage at which transition to standard English from other languages or other varieties of English ought to take place.

Languages other than English. We can distinguish three phases in the national perception of the usefulness of community languages in Australian social life. Firstly, community languages are seen to have a valid role in meeting the communication needs of those who have insufficient English. There will always be some who, for a variety of compelling reasons, do not master English to the degree where they can conduct all their transactions in English. These people need to be catered for, and across the nation there are special social security arrangements, translating and interpreting services, the provision of multilingual information and also the use of a wide range of languages where needed, in industry, at union meetings, etc. There is general support for the use of ethnic community languages where the needs are obvious.

Secondly, and more recently, ethnic groups are seen to have a right to maintain their language and culture, to express that culture and to pass it on to their children. Some public funds are available to maintain languages and cultures through multilingual library and media services, through support for ethnic schools, through increased community language teaching and bilingual education. There is, however, great uncertainty as to how much responsibility the broader society should take for these provisions. There is also uncertainty as to how much schools *can* do towards maintaining languages:

> Most writers would agree that the role of the school is often over-estimated. Unless the language and culture are strong in the home and in other community domains, the school can do very little. The schools can strengthen or weaken the community but they can never replace it as the preserver of a living language and culture. Fishman would add that the community also needs to have a politically sophisticated power base as well as real out-of-school roles for the language.
>
> Kjolseth suggests that the school ought to take a more active role in promoting language maintenance in the community.

> He would have schools fostering bilingual usage outside the school through sponsoring community activities. Although he would agree that schools alone cannot be responsible for language maintenance, he does see the school as a focus for community efforts at language maintenance.
>
> (Horvath 1980, p. 14)

Thirdly, and most recently, the view has developed that ethnic community languages are an invaluable national resource, available to boost Australia's international credibility and effectiveness in the spheres of trade, development assistance, diplomacy and cultural relations. More directly, Australians are beginning to appreciate the enriching effect that other cultures and other languages have on Australian life. There are signs that more Australians are now learning languages to communicate more freely across cultural barriers – to talk to in-laws, grandparents or just to friends and neighbours.

As an example of the three phases in action, multicultural television fills all the described roles: it is a service to non-English speaking Australians; it is a voice for the expression of ethnic identities; and it is a powerful organ for promoting the appreciation and understanding of other cultures.

More and more 'foreign' languages in Australia have become community languages as more and more diverse immigrants enter the country. In 1981 the Commonwealth Department of Education identified the following community languages taught in schools: at primary level, Adnamatana, Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Macedonian, Malay, Maltese, Modern Greek, Pitjantjatjara, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Ukranian and Vietnamese; as well as and supplementing these, at secondary schools there were: Czech, Esperanto, Estonian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Slovenian and general language courses.

This range of community languages, available already to some Australians, raises a problem of great complexity at the policy level. At what level of political organisation do we declare a language to be a community language? The nation? The state? The local government area? This question cannot be answered categorically. In Sydney, for instance, Italian would be a community language in Leichhardt but not in Wahroonga. Local determination seems in-

evitable, and a devolution of authority in matters of finance, administration and curriculum would need to follow.

Of relevance to those within the formal institution of education (and to those charged with the task of training teachers) is the range of tertiary opportunities available for language study. 'Community languages', in the main, do not have well-established programmes at higher levels. Funds have recently been approved for this purpose, and policy details await the attention of some nationally constituted body.

The secondary school has been the traditional arena of second language learning in Australia. It is likely that schooling at that level will be unable to cope with the bewildering array of purposes advanced for language learning and use. Primary schools might have to take over the language maintenance role advocated in relation to community languages. Tertiary education might meet other objectives, such as providing extensive knowledge of the written language. Voluntary ethnic schools, adult and further education, private language schools and colleges might all have a growing role under a co-ordinated policy; although such an integration might highlight differences and disparities of esteem across the sectors. The immediate concern is to assess the present scene and, where appropriate, assign new priorities and reallocate existing resources.

Bilingual education. This special form of education has received more attention in developed countries as research has accumulated to show that bilingualism is an intellectual *asset* to the child, rather than a *deficit:* bilinguals are more flexible cognitively, more innovative and more given to creative and divergent thinking; bilingualism can accelerate the development of non-verbal and indeed verbal abilities. Nemetz Robinson offers a definition:

> Bilingual education is distinguished from foreign or second language education, including the study of community languages, in that bilingual education is the use of a non-dominant language as the medium of instruction during some part of the school day.
>
> (Nemetz Robinson 1978, p. 8)

Bilingual education can take many forms and is therefore difficult to define. However, all programmes share one distinctive

feature: they recognise the student's knowledge of at least two languages. Very often the programmes are directed at increasing future access to polity by some disadvantaged community group:

> When a government institutes some form of bilingual education, it is a recognition of its responsibility, to a greater or lesser extent, to the linguistic minorities within the nation. Often, but not always, the linguistic minority also has low socio-economic status with all of the attendent characteristics that have been so widely discussed in the literature on the education of the so-called 'disadvantaged'. Hence bilingual education more often than not . . . is directed at the powerless, the socio-economically disadvantaged.
>
> (Horvath 1980, p. 16)

In ordinary schools bilingual instruction involving languages used in the Australian community has been expanded in recent years. Programmes are often considered as temporary, their aim being to enable children to maintain or develop their academic knowledge while they are still learning English. Once enough English is acquired, perhaps toward the end of primary school, education usually proceeds in English alone. This approach to bilingual education, though, plays little role in *maintaining* the mother tongue language of children: it constitutes a learning process in which language shift is occurring, not language maintenance.

Severe problems exist for planning bilingual education for those children whose mother tongue is a *regional variety* of a national language. This is most noted in the case of Italian-born children, who might be users of one of the many Italian "dialetti" that are quite remote from the national Florentine Italian. How can bilingual studies proceed in Italian and English for these children if neither Italian nor English is the children's true mother tongue? For some schools severe curricular problems exist too if immigrant children have a range of different proficiencies in their mother tongue. These problems are made worse if children have had to learn their mother tongue alongside some other national language in their homeland.

The policies which are evolved to support the maintenance and development of English as the mother tongue could also be explored in relation to the maintenance of community languages for their potential relevance to those Australians whose mother tongue is not

English. It is also important to consider how monolingual English-speaking children could benefit from thoroughly learning another language at an early age.

Aboriginal Languages. In the area of Aboriginal education Australia has in fact embraced bilingual education. Aboriginal bilingual programmes began in 1973 in the Northern Territory. They receive the support of the Federal Government. They have the services of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers and resident linguists. To date in several States the programmes have been concerned mainly with the early years, but it is hoped that the Aboriginal child's mother tongue will be maintained in the curriculum, even after the transition has been made to English. These programmes have earned Australia international respect.

Aboriginal people and societies range from the traditional hunter and gatherer through to people who live lives not different from Anglo-Australians. Approximately 300 living Aboriginal languages existed prior to the white-European invasion of Australia in the eighteenth century. Numerous attempts at a total, forced and sometimes violent assimilation of Aboriginal people resulted in many Aboriginal tongues becoming extinct. Today only 50 or so languages are spoken by Aboriginal people, some only on ceremonial occasions. They present serious problems for education and polity: a widespread multilingualism is a feature of outback Aboriginal communities, because these languages have no literature their speakers can draw no support in learning and transmitting the languages from a written tradition.

Three organisations, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, are prominent in supporting increasing work aimed at researching and describing traditional languages. Certain languages, such as Pitjantjatjara, are offered to a wider linguistic constituency through a number of schools and tertiary institutions. Inevitably a selection of some kind will need to be made if some of these languages are to be preserved as living tongues. The involvement of Aboriginal people themselves in this selection process and as teachers and linguists is essential to putting policies into action in this area.

Aboriginal Kriol (creole) for many years was not recognised by non-Aborigines as a distinct language entity. It was noted only that

some Aborigines spoke good English, while others, with less English contact, spoke a 'broken English'. Greater awareness of the Kriol by Whites has followed changes in attitude to such languages in recent years, suggesting the possibility of a national Aboriginal language perhaps based on the Kriol that is spoken by about 10 per cent of the Aboriginal population.

In principle all human languages are valuable and deserve preservation. Each one is a unique repository of a culture. Australia will be called upon to make some hard decisions in the near future about the maintenance or the death of many of its 'true' national languages. Their future as living tongues might be brief indeed, especially as the proposed Australian satellite network will directly disseminate English language television into areas where until now it has had only an indirect influence.

Expectations from the report on a national language policy. This interface study has identified many of the expectations, the controversies and the uniquely Australian problems that a National Language Policy will need to address. A study of the kind undertaken by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts is certainly timely; it comes as a result of professional and community pressures, from organisations and individuals who are witnesses to the interface that exists in Australia between education, polity and language.

It is hoped that a further interface study might announce that expectations have been met; that the Report on a National Language Policy, to be released in the near future, will offer Australia a range of alternative proposals providing major guidelines for future action, a policy that is in the interests of the nation's education, polity and social integration.

Resource planning: addressing national priorities through the planned allocation of resources

Interfaces in resource allocation. The first two case studies made clear that national priorities in Australia for secondary education and language were being addressed in a number of ways including the planned allocation of resources. For secondary education, the Participation and Equity Programme of the Commonwealth Schools Commission will provide approximately $44 million in 1985

to help achieve objectives related to a more equal distribution of outcomes of education, a more responsive system of education, access to adequately resourced schools, and a contribution to economic recovery and development. For language, the Commission, through its English as a Second Language Programme, will provide approximately $68 million in 1985, while in related areas, the Multicultural Education Programme and the Ethnic Schools Programme will provide an estimated $5 million and $4 million, respectively. These programmes are just four of seventeen through which the Commonwealth Schools Commission is meeting national priorities in education with total funding for 1985 estimated at $1,387 million (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p. 67).

The purpose of this third study is to consider more broadly the manner in which national priorities in education are being addressed through resource planning. In this first section, the interfaces are identified, with budget allocations seen as the outcome of a number of forces; namely, political, socio-cultural, economic, demographic, legal-governmental and technological. Studies in three countries are cited as evidence of the primacy of the political process. The second section provides a brief historical review of arrangements for funding education in Australia. The third section considers the role of the Commonwealth in some detail, with special attention given to the work of the Commonwealth Schools Commission whose establishment in 1973 was a watershed in addressing national priorities in education through resource planning. Current and emerging issues which are shaping the work of the Commission are given special attention. The fourth section outlines approaches which have been adopted at the state level to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of resource planning, with all but one of the states adopting a form of programme budgeting to achieve these ends. The fifth section examines developments at the school level which seem to have particular promise for achieving the intents of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and for ensuring that resources are allocated in a manner which reflect local as well as state and national priorities. The final section provides four scenarios for the future of resource planning for education in Australia. A likely and preferred scenario is identified. The study is limited in the main to resource planning for primary and secondary schools.

The nature of the interface. In this study, the budgeting process is seen as the major mechanism for resource planning, with the

contemporary view of budgeting making clear an interface with polity. Dye (1975, p. 217), for example, has observed that:

> The budget is the single most important policy statement of any government . . . Budgets determine what programmes and policies are to be increased, decreased, lapsed, initiated, or renewed. The budget lies at the heart of the policy process.

Lindblom (1968, p. 8) saw this interface as a recent development, asserting that "Budgeting has outlived its days as an unexciting administrative tool; it has blossomed into a high-level process for systematically appraising policy choice themselves." Steiss (1972, 148) balances the policy and administration functions of the budget, with acknowledgement of the multi-faceted nature of interfaces with other processes:

> The purposes of the public budget are both *policy* and *administration*. The budget is more than a financial document; it represents a process by which (1) public policy is made; (2) public action programmes are put into effect; and (3) both legislative and administrative controls are established. A budget must be interwoven by the same social, economic, and political processes that affect the conduct of all public affairs.

The multi-facted nature of the interface may be demonstrated in three national settings. Caldwell (1981) conducted a comprehensive study for the Government of Alberta in Canada to trace the evolution of financial arrangements for schools in the period 1972-80. Particular attention was paid to the nature of and reasons for the most significant changes to grant systems or programmes during that period, including the decision making process. The evolution of twenty-two grants was studied, with the grants emerging in each instance as a result of the interplay of six forces defined as follows:

Political	Conditions arising from demands made on government.
Socio-cultural	Conditions which reflected the views, beliefs, norms and behaviours of society or groups within society.
Economic	Conditions associated with the economy of the nation, the province (state) or a region within the province.

Demographic	The physical conditions of aggregations of people – organisations, school systems, municipal governments – with whom the Government . . . is associated.
Legal-Governmental	Conditions arising from laws and regulations as well as from the judgement of courts which interpret those laws and regulations.
Technological	Conditions associated with the knowledge, skills, practices or techniques for accomplishing a task.

(Caldwell, 1981: 15)

Caldwell (1981, 18) found, for example, that economic, socio-cultural and political conditions were associated with expanded support for private schools, with the primacy of the political, there being a highly effective demand on government by organisations with an interest in private schools. The influence exerted by such groups was more effective than that exercised by the ostensibly more powerful lobbies of the Alberta Teachers Association and the Alberta School Trustees Association, both of which generally opposed an expansion of government support in this area. Underlying some of the political demands and the government response were economic and socio-cultural factors. Economic conditions resulted in severe financial hardship for many private schools, conditions which were documented in various representations to government at the time of emerging government policy. A socio-cultural condition appeared to be an increasing sense of "fairness" which probably had its impact in lack of opposition to government action rather than overt support, except for those with a special interest in private schools. The interplay of these three conditions has also been evident in the emergence in Australia of increasing State and Commonwealth support for non-government schools.

A similar analysis of government support for schools in the United States was made by Garms, Guthrie and Pierce who selected a framework of "political economy" to study the evolution of grants and to advocate new approaches to school finance. They noted the interface between public values and public school policy in the following terms:

> American culture contains three strongly held values that significantly influence public policy; *equality*, *efficiency*, and *liberty*. Government actions regarding national defence, housing, taxation, anti-trust regulation, racial desegregation, and literally hundreds of other policy dimensions, including education are motivated and molded by one or more of these three values . . . Education is one of the prime instruments through which society attempts to promote all three values.
>
> (Garms, Guthrie and Pierce 1978, pp. 18-19)

A clearly articulated set of public values has also shaped Commonwealth support for schools in Australia. The Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel, 1973) was established in response to what was seen as three serious deficiencies in schools: lack of resource, inequality of opportunity for schooling, and shortcomings in the quality of education. The recommendations of the Committee were shaped by seven values which, as is demonstrated later in this study, are evident in the financial arrangements for schools through grants of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. These values are devolution of responsibility, equality of opportunity for schooling, diversity in forms of schooling, the right of parents to educate their children outside the government schools, community involvement, retaining the special purposes of schools, and recurrent or lifelong education. The establishment of the Commonwealth Schools Commission reflected a generally held view that the Commonwealth should play a more powerful role in support of the nation's schools and, as Birch (1976, p. 59) has noted, the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission appears to have been the "key opinion-transmitted" in the development of policy which reflected general community support for the values listed above.

Historical review of educational resource planning. This review of arrangements for funding education in Australia provides the context for an examination of current and emerging approaches at the national, state and local levels.

Bassett (cited by Harman and Smart 1982, p. 7) has summarised developments in Australian education at the national level in the following terms:

> . . . from the Federal Government's small involvement in university education in the post World War II period, it has now virtually taken control of tertiary education, as well as set up machinery for intervention in every sector of education in the country.

These are remarkable developments, given the silence of the Australian Constitution on the question of education hence, under Section 107 of the Constitution, retention of powers in education at the state level, and a High Court judgement cited by Birch (1982, p. 35) that " . . . it is outside the power of the Commonwealth Parliament to exercise general control of education in the schools or universities of Australia . . . " The developments described by Bassett were made possible by financial arrangements which are permitted under Section 96 of the Constitution:

> During a period of ten years after the establishment of the Commonwealth and thereafter until the Parliament otherwise provides, the Parliament may grant financial assistance to any State on such terms and conditions as the Parliament sees fit.

There was little national involvement in education in the years following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. A variety of small training schemes were supported, including a national fitness programme for schools (1909), a veterans vocational training scheme (1918), Schools of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Sydney (1928), Lady Gowrie Pre-School Centres (1938) and a technical training scheme (1940). The rapid growth occurred in the years following the Second World War with the key events summarised in Table 1 (adapted from Harman and Smart 1982, pp. 181-186.)

The rapid growth of Commonwealth support for all forms of education may be demonstrated in financial terms by estimates of expenditure in the decade from 1961-62 to 1971-72 prior to the establishment of the Schools Commission. State expenditure over the decade increased from $436 million to $1,516 million while Commonwealth support grew from $55 million to $354 million (Partridge 1974, p. xxv). In the years 1973-75, however, the Commonwealth's direct expenditure on education increased to $2,000 million to establish the basic pattern which is in evidence today. (Smart 1982, p. 15).

Perhaps the most powerful statement of the factors which led to Commonwealth involvement is that offered by Partridge (1974, p. xxiii). He makes clear the interface of education and polity in the context of resource planning:

> The Commonwealth government would have been compelled to supply more of the finance for education, and to concern itself increasingly with matters of educational policy whether it wanted to or not; the magnitude of the problems faced by the governments, the speed of change, the inability of six states working separately to mobilise the resources (not only financial resources) called for, made it inevitable that the central government should get more deeply involved. There seems to be no doubt that public attitudes have been transformed in the last couple of decades; the public accepts education as being one of the most crucial areas of social policy and growth; and it looks increasingly to the national government to take the responsibility for solving problems of national scope and importance.

Table 1. National involvement in education from 1945
(based on Harman and Smart 1982, pp. 181-186)

Year	*Event*
1945	Establishment of Commonwealth Office of Education and Universities Commission.
1951	Establishment of Commonwealth Universities Scholarship Scheme and passing of State Grants (Universities) Act which provided matching funds for State universities on a formula basis.
1959	Australian Universities Commission established.
1965	Establishment of Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education with first Commonwealth grants to States for colleges of advanced education.
1966	Establishment of Commonwealth Department of Education and Science.
1968	Capital assistance programmes for secondary school libraries, government teachers colleges, and pre-schools.
1969	Per capita grants for non-government schools.
1971	Establishment of the Commission on Advanced Education.
1972	Establishment of Commonwealth Teaching Service.
	Establishment of Interim Committee of the Schools Commission, chaired by Professor Peter Karmel.
1973	Schools Commission established.
1974	Commonwealth assumes responsibility for providing all regular recurrent and capital funds for universities and colleges of advanced education; abolition of tuition fees in universities, colleges of advanced education, and technical and further education.
1975	Establishment of Technical and Further Education Commission.
1977	Establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission, replacing the Universities Commission, the Commission on Advanced Education and the Technical and Further Education Commission.

Table 2. Programmes of the Commonwealth Schools Commission in 1985
(Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p. 67)

Programme	*1985 Estimates ($'000)*		
	Government Schools	*Non-Government Schools*	*Joint Programmes*
General Recurrent	335,600	610,800	
Primary Basic Learning	5,300	1,400	
Participation and Equity	39,872	4,671	511
Computer Education	5,016	1,254	
English as a Second Language	50,188	18,203	
Disadvantaged Schools	28,689	5,572	
Special Education	20,949	5,399	
Capital	159,099	55,093	
Emergency Assistance		614	
Multicultural Education			4,752
Ethnic Schools			3,975
Country Areas			9,770
Residential Institutions			2,186
Severely Handicapped			3,571
Professional Development			10,795
Education Centres			2,286
Projects of National Significance			1,737
TOTAL	644,713	703,006	39,583

It is clear that 1973 is the watershed year in terms of resource planning for schools to reflect national priorities. While no detail is provided here of trends in resource planning at the state, and local levels, the following summarises the general pattern until 1973:

1. Most of the resources for government schools were provided by state governments, with little decentralisation of funds to the school level. What money existed at the school level was raised in the main by local volunteer effort.

2. Most of the resources for non-government schools were provided through tuition fees and local volunteer fundraising.

Current and emerging patterns of Commonwealth support. The current programmes of the Commonwealth Schools Commission are listed in Table 2, with estimates of expenditure for 1985. Estimates provide approximately $645 million for government schools,

$703 million for non-government schools and $40 million in joint programmes for a total allocation of about $1,387 million. (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p. 67). The allocation for non-government schools exceeds that for government schools despite the fact that only about one-quarter of the nation's students are educated in non-government schools. The pattern is quite different as far as funding by State governments is concerned with most being allocated to government schools. The pattern of Commonwealth allocations is, nonetheless, a contentious issue with interest groups such as the Australian Teachers Federation leading a steady lobby for reducing allocations to non-government schools. The positions of all major political parties make clear, however, that this pattern is unlikely to change in any significant way.

The need to address the set of national problems identified in the Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel, 1973) is still evident in the current programmes of the Commission. Problems related to lack of opportunity, for example, are addressed through programmes for Primary Basic Learning, Participation and Equity, English as a Second Language, Disadvantaged Schools, Special Education, Multicultural Education, Ethnic Schools, Country Areas, Residential Institutions and Severely Handicapped. All programmes address the problems of limited resources but the General Recurrent and Capital programmes are intended to meet at least in part the resource needs of the nation's schools. Issues related to quality are addressed in all programmes but especially those concerned with Professional Development, Education Centres and Projects of National Significance. However, as is noted later in this section, the Commonwealth Government has called for further initiatives as far as quality is concerned.

The values which shaped the establishment of the Schools Commission are similarly reflected in the programmes listed in Table 2. Diversity, for example, is fostered through programmes such as Multicultural Education and Ethnic Schools. Equality of opportunity is fostered through programmes for Participation and Equity and others listed in the preceding paragraph. A Project of National Significance of the Commission conducted jointly with Education Departments which reflected a priority on diversity, equality and community involvement was the Choice and Diversity Project. The Commission's 1979-81 Triennial Report discussed the project in the

context of choice and diversity in government schools, with three ingredients:

> . . . the need for more real choices within state school systems and among programmes within government schools; the necessity for local community input into deciding what the alternatives were to be and the desirability of joint planning by groups of schools to enable the sharing of facilities and services.
>
> (Choice and Diversity Project 1984, p. 3)

The Choice and Diversity Project concluded in 1983 after a number of exploratory endeavours in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

The values of devolution and community involvement are fostered through the manner in which the various programmes are administered. The Disadvantaged Schools Programme, for example, calls for grants to individual schools on the basis of proposals prepared by staff in consultation with members of the school community and, where appropriate, students. Decisions on allocation of funds to individual schools are similarly made by committees which are broadly representative of the community. The Innovations Programme, which concluded in 1982, reflected a similar approach and the importance attached to innovation by the Interim Committee:

> If the nation's schools are to bear the responsibilities which seem to the Committee to be inescapable in a society such as ours, then many innovations will have to be made in the organisation and conduct of learning. By innovation, the Committee means the creation of change by the introduction of something new . . . Accordingly the Committee is proposing that funds should be available to support at the school level special projects of an innovatory kind or with implications for change. Applications for financial support would be invited from individuals and groups, not only of teachers but from the community, so as to provide an opportunity for change to come from beyond present institutional frameworks.
>
> (Karmel 1973, pp. 126-127)

The Innovations Programme was conducted from 1974-1982. An assessment of its operation in one state, Tasmania, was that it

"was successfully initiated, implemented and operated because committed people found ways to make it happen." (Veal 1982, p. 96)

The Disadvantaged Schools Programme and the discontinued Innovations Programme are two instances of national priorities being addressed through Commonwealth funding but with design and implementation of individual projects the concern of schools, with community involvement a condition of support. The States, being the level of governance with constitutional powers in education, were, paradoxically, virtually excluded from the process. The importance that the Commonwealth Schools Commission attaches to resource planning at the school level is taken up in another section of this study.

The manner in which the Schools Commission itself has operated is a further illustration of the interface of education and polity in the context of resource planning. McKinnon (1982, p. 148), a former Chairman of the Commission, described the process in political terms as follows:

> . . . the Commission sits amid all the forces at work in Australian school-level education. Because its recommendations inevitably have political overtones, it is in a very sensitive position, open to continuous scrutiny. It is constantly involved in consulting, liaising, and acquiring and disseminating information. It is active and involved in school affairs, and this brings it into networks and chains of relationships which inevitably involve it in taking stances and attracting support (and opposition) from groups and alliances, both official and non-official.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission has established a number of directions for the future which are relevant to this study. Considered here are those related to quality, a common basis for funding of government and non-government schools, and accountability. A problem addressed by the Interim Committee was quality in education. The Commonwealth Government called for a renewed effort in this regard in 1984 with the establishment of a Quality of Education Review Committee chaired by Professor Peter Karmel, the Chairman of the Interim Committee of the early seventies. The terms of reference for the new investigation made clear the importance of resource planning for quality:

Thus, it (the Commonwealth) wishes to develop clear, more efficient strategies to direct the increased funds in ways that ensure:

- the attainment of a satisfactory standard by the great majority of students at successive stages of a general curriculum, with particular reference to communications, literacy and numeracy;
- an improved relationship between secondary education and employment and tertiary education opportunities and requirements;
- improvement in these outcomes of education by funding at a level consistent with other priority claims on the Commonwealth, including those of the TAFE and higher education sectors.

(Commonwealth School Commission 1984, p. 64)

The concern for quality matches similar developments in the United States (Gardner, 1984) and the United Kingdom.

A second new direction at the Commonwealth level with implications for resource planning at all levels is a decision to establish funding schemes with a common basis for government and non-government schools. Commonwealth grants will be paid on a per capita basis related to what is described as "a community standard of educational resources." The following are features of the approach:

1. The standards based on judgements about the basic educational needs of schools, have been costed at $2,195 per primary student and $3,240 per secondary student for the years 1985-1988.

2. The standards provide a basis for planning the resource contributions of the funding partners. The Commonwealth Schools Commission will monitor the progress of Commonwealth, State and, for non-government schools, community contribution to the standards over the period from 1985-1988.

3. Although the standards are expressed in per student terms, it is the intent of the Commonwealth that the actual allocation of resources meet the differing resource needs of individual students

and schools, with additional resources for students with special needs as described in the report *Commonwealth Standards for Australian Schools.*

4. The Commonwealth has set 1992 as the target year for the Commonwealth's full contribution to the standard.

(Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984)

In responding to the Commonwealth's intent as far as the standards are concerned, it is interesting to note the Commission's concern that "decisions about resource allocation at the individual school level should be capable of being examined and debated by the community concerned." (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p. 7). This issue is taken up by the Commonwealth in a third direction with major implications for resource planning.

The third direction of the Commonwealth is its instruction to the Commonwealth Schools Commission to enhance accountability arrangements to "provide assurance for the Commonwealth that systems and schools in receipt of Commonwealth funds are applying these resources to established national priorities in education." (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1984, p. 59). The Commonwealth was in this respect accepting in principle the recommendation of the Commission set out in its report on *Funding Policies for Australian Schools,* the general principles of which were as follows:

a) provision of information by the States on the use of Commonwealth general recurrent grants, in a standardised form to be negotiated with the States;

b) reporting by system authorities on the agreed use of increased Commonwealth funds and on relative State and Commonwealth contributions to the agreed resource improvements;

c) development of procedures for the approval and monitoring of the distribution of Commonwealth grants to government school system suthorities, to be negotiated with the States, to ensure that Commonwealth general recurrent grants are distributed to schools according to relative resource needs; these procedures to involve parent and teacher groups; and

d) discussion with State authorities on ways in which information on the resources of individual government schools might be more publicly accessible."

(Commonwealth School Commission 1984, p. 9)

The new directions concerned with community standards and accountability have clear implications for resource planning at the State and local levels. Developments at these levels are described in the next two sections of this study. While this section of the study has examined current and future directions in the Commonwealth role, the future of Commonwealth support in a broad sense and of the Commonwealth Schools Commission is the subject of consideration in the final section where scenarios are offered for resource planning in education.

Development in resource planning at the state level. The directions of the Commonwealth to the Commonwealth Schools Commission on accountability described in the last section will require States to establish an approach to resource planning and reporting which will provide information on the allocation of all Commonwealth funds in a fashion readily understood by all with an interest in education. The groundwork for such an approach has already been laid with a decision by all states but one as well as the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Northern Territory to adopt programme budgeting. Decisions have also been made in two States, Victoria and Tasmania, to extend the approach to the school level, with implementation already underway in Victoria.

The benefits of programme budgeting were set out by Hughes (1982, p. 143-144) in recommending the adoption of programme budgeting for Tasmania:

> The advantages of programme budgeting are now widely acknowledged in administration. The first advantage is that, in this system, planning is more strongly emphasised than in the traditional incremental, line-item, object budgets. As a result, resources can be more closely matched with needs. A second advantage that programme budgeting has over traditional systems is that it provides much more detailed information about programmes, alternatives, and costs. Thus decision-makers are more able to say which programmes

should be expanded, which should be retained, which should be curtailed and which should be eliminated. A third advantage of programme budgeting lies in its close integration of policy making, forward planning and evaluation. This contrasts with the *ad hoc* haphazard approaches which often characterise the budget process.

The most comprehensive approach to programme budgeting to be found in 1985 is that in Victoria where implementation at the school level has commenced and the benefits noted by Hughes have already been experienced. The Treasurer of the State, R.A. Jolly (1983) believes that "The introduction of Programme Budgeting is leading to revitalisation within the Budget sector . . . . (and) better facilitates resource allocation to Government priorities and policies."

Seven programmes have been established in the Victorian approach: Corporate Services, School Education, Student Services, Equal Educational Opportunities, School Development and Resource Services, Non-Government Schools and Education Ministry Services. The listing of sub-programmes and components in Table 3 illustrates the manner in which a government priority for providing

Table 3. Programme budget classification for equal educational opportunities in Victoria
(Jolly 1983, p. 86)

Sub-Programme	*Component*
Multicultural and Migrant Education	Adult Migrant Education
	Multicultural and Child Migrant Education
Equal Education Services	Country Education
	Supplementary Grants
	Transition Education
Aboriginal Education	Aboriginal Education Services
	Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
Education of Women and Girls	Management and Information Services
	Curriculum Materials Development and Dissemination

equal educational opportunities is reflected in the budget. The Equal Educational Opportunities Programme, which also reflects the national priority described elsewhere in this study, has components which clearly make it possible to identify allocations for programmes which are funded from Commonwealth sources; for example, the sub-programme of Equal Education Services has components entitled Country Education (funded from the Commonwealth Schools Commission programme Country Areas), Supplementary Grants (funded from the Commission's programme for Disadvantaged Schools) and Transition Education (now renamed Participation and Equity and funded from the Commission's programme of the same name). The Programme budget itself provides a one page description of each Sub-Programme containing brief statements entitled Description, Objectives, Indicators and a listing of Component Costs for components within the sub-programme.

It is apparent that a budget process which provides information in programme form in the manner described above will contribute to achieving Commonwealth intents as far as accountability is concerned. The commentary contained in the one-page sub-programme summaries is of a kind which will enable parent and teacher groups to participate effectively in the approval and monitoring of the distribution of Commonwealth grants as advocated by the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1984, p. 9). The potential for participation is enhanced considerably with the introduction of school-level programme budgeting in the manner described in the next section of this study.

It is important before concluding this section to make clear the distinctions between the contemporary approach to programme budgeting in Australia and the generally discredited attempts at Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS) in the United States and some other countries in the 1960s and 1970s. While some cautions have been expressed in Australia (Hardman 1984) the differences are substantial. PPBS generally suffered from over-analysis with planners encouraged to examine alternatives for funding in elaborate detail. Mountains of paperwork tended to paralyse performance. Excessive attention was also given to evaluation and indicators of effectiveness to a degree not warranted in service departments of governments. On the other hand, inadequate attention was given to the professional development of staff and to

allowing sufficient time for implementation in stages. The approach was, to some extent, premature since low-cost and effective computer-based accounting systems were not generally available when PPBS made its appearance. Well implemented systems of programme budgeting in Australia have tended to avoid these shortcomings with Victoria, for example, allowing three to five years for introduction and setting a lower profile in the early stages for performance indicators. A critical appraisal of the introduction of programme budgeting in the Australian setting is contained in a recent paper by Caldwell (1983).

Resource planning at the school level. It was noted in the second section of this study that until recently, resource planning at the school level was minimal in Government schools since resources were invariably provided by the State. Discretionary funds were largely the result of local volunteer effort. The situation has changed in a major way with the advent of the Schools Commission and a general trend to the decentralisation of decision making to the school level. As noted in the third section, schools now make direct application for grants offered by the Commonwealth Schools Commission in programmes such as Disadvantaged Schools. Government schools in all states and territories now receive enough funds from the State level to warrant the introduction of efficient and effective approaches to resource planning. It is the purpose of this section of the study to outline some of the more promising approaches, with comment on their potential for contributing to the attainment of national priorities in education.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission has recognised from its inception that resource planning at the school level was critical to achieving its broad objectives for overcoming shortcomings in the areas of opportunity, resources and quality. The values of devolution of responsibility and community involvement have prevailed since 1973. The importance of planning at the school level is also gaining wide recognition in other countries. Mackenzie (1983, p. 12) wrote the following in the content of school improvement and effectiveness in the United States, with a caution for those who have high expectations for a "community standards" approach of the kind advocated by the Commonwealth and outlined in the third section of this study:

> Rather than a de-emphasis on school resources, the new research on effectiveness implies a shift in perspective from viewing resources as neutral 'input' to looking critically at how existing and future resources can be used to achieve higher goals. The resource needs of individual schools may vary such that research cannot identify 'master resources' that will be helpful to every school . . .
>
> Because resources have meaning only in relation to specific needs, the search for a national policy on how schools should spend their money has been largely fruitless . . . Although the 'best' level of staff and faculty involvement in local decision is an open question . . . it is evident that the most effective allocations will be those that are most responsive to local needs and that flow out of the evolution of comprehensive planning for instructional improvement.

Research in resource allocation at the school level has also been neglected, with Monk (1981 p. 215) noting that "preoccupation with resource allocation at what have been called macro levels . . . runs the risk of obscuring important elements of the process by which resources flow to students for the purpose of producing learning outcomes." The need for research at the school level in Australia led to the Effective Resource Allocation in Schools Project (ERASP), a joint endeavour of the Centre for Education at the University of Tasmania and the Education Department of Tasmania, funded by the Commonwealth Schools Commission, as a Project of National Significance. A summary report of the project has been prepared by Caldwell (1985) who served as Director.

The method adopted in ERASP was to study approaches to the allocation of resources in highly effective schools, with effectiveness considered in both a general sense and in the manner in which resources are allocated. The study was carried out in government and non-government schools in the two states – Tasmania and South Australia – which had decentralised more funds to schools than had been decentralised in other states. Indeed, it emerged in the preliminary studies of the project that Tasmania was the only state which had followed the intent of the Schools Commission as far as government schools were concerned by decentralising for direct school decision making the larger part of funds coming to the State in the General Recurent Programme of the Commission.

Three facets of ERASP are described here: (1) the criteria used to identify schools which allocate their resources in a highly effective manner; (2) the approach to programme budgeting which has been implemented in an exemplary school and which has become the prototype for the introduction of school level programme budgeting in a number of states; and (3) an approach to integrating funds from different sources as a means of increasing school flexibility.

A first task in ERASP was to identify highly effective schools for case study. Persons who provided nominations for highly effective schools were given criteria to guide their judgements, with two sets in each instance, one listing criteria for effectiveness in a general sense, the other listing criteria for a high degree of effectiveness in the allocation of resources. Both sets of criteria were compiled from a comprehensive review of literature on effective schools and the critical reaction of a panel of experts. The process and the findings of the case studies are described in detail by Misko (1985). The criteria for a high degree of effectiveness in resource allocation are reproduced in Table 4, with nine related to the process and three related to the product. Of particular interest in the context of earlier sections of this study is that the criteria focus on an approach which "takes full account of local as well as system (State and Commonwealth) needs" and provide "opportunity for appropriate involvement of staff, students and the community, "both reflecting the values of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the new directions of the Commonwealth as far as resource standards and accountability are concerned.

Only one school had an approach to resource allocation which met in a comprehensive manner all of the criteria listed in Table 4. This school also received more nominations than any other in Tasmania as a highly effective school, both in a general sense and in the manner in which its resources were allocated. It was found that this school, Rosebery District High School, had implemented a system of school-level programme budgeting, in most respects quite independently of Commonwealth and State initiatives. Implementation occurred under the leadership of the principal, J.M. Spinks. A detailed account is given by Caldwell and Spinks (1985) who were subsequently invited to serve as consultants to the Education Department of Victoria in the implementation of programme budgeting in government schools in Victoria. Features of the approach are as follows:

Table 4. Criteria used in Effective Resource Allocation in Schools Project to identify schools which allocate resources in a highly effective manner

Criterion		*Indicator*
Process	1.	Educational needs are identified and placed in an order of priority.
	2.	The order of priority takes full account of local as well as system needs.
	3.	Resources are allocated according to priorities among educational needs.
	4.	There is opportunity for appropriate involvement of staff, students and the community.
	5.	Consideration is given to criteria for evaluating the impact of resource allocation.
	6.	A budget is produced for staff and others which outlines the financial plan in understandable fashion.
	7.	Appropriate accounting procedures are established to monitor and control expenditure.
	8.	Money can be transferred from one category of the budget to another as needs change or emerge.
Product	1.	High priority needs are consistently satisfied through the planned allocation of resources of all kinds.
	2.	Actual expenditure matches intended expenditure, allowing for flexibility to meet emerging and/or changing needs.
	3.	There is general understanding and broad acceptance by participants of the process and its outcomes.

1. A council of representatives of parents and teachers is responsible for adopting policies and identifying priorities for the school.

2. The principal and staff prepare programme plans and budgets for each of the forty-one programmes offered in the school. Plans and budgets must reflect the policies and priorities adopted by the council as well as those of the State and Commonwealth.

3. Programme plans and budgets are adopted by the council if they are consistent with the aforementioned policies and priorities.

4. Commonwealth and State priorities can be clearly identified and understood either in individual programmes or across programmes; allocations and expenditures can be monitored through a system of programme accounts.

5. A cyclical approach to evaluation has been established, with all programmes evaluated in a major fashion once every five years and in a minor fashion annually.

6. A minimum of paperwork is required, with policies limited to one page, plans and budgets to two pages, and evaluation reports to two pages.

7. All documents are widely available in the community and to authorities at the State and Commonwealth levels.

The third facet of ERASP to be considered here is the approach developed in South Australia to enhance flexibility at the school level, reflecting another value of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and alleviating a source of considerable frustration to administrators at all levels. In contrast to recent practices of sending money to schools at different times of the year according to source, with contraints on spending in each instance, an approach has been developed wherein schools receive a single lump-sum allocation at one time of the year without constraints except that the pattern of allocation within the school must reflect State and Commonwealth priorities according to the factors which shaped the determination of the lump-sum allocation. The practice in South Australia was documented for ERASP by Curtis (1985).

The approach to the introduction of school-level programme budgeting in Victoria is noteworthy for its association with other changes in that State, all of which relect the values held by the Schools Commission since its inception in 1973. In December 1983, for example, the Education Act 1958 was amended so that the school council shall now "determine the general education policy of the school, within guidelines provided by the Minister." A ministerial statement in early 1984 established the link between policy and resource planning, noting that the budget "should ensure that the funds that are expected to be available are put to the best use in terms of the school's educational policy." The approach to school-level programme budgeting described above provides a useful framework for implementing these new structures and processes in Victoria.

The council role in Victoria as far as policy and budget are concerned is the most powerful in Australia though the same powers were advocated for the ACT by Hughes (1973) in his report which led to the establishment of the ACT Schools Authority. However, the resource planning recommendation for the ACT was not implemented. It is evident from the findings of ERASP and developments in Victoria that the achievement of national priorities in education can be enhanced by the introduction of programme budgeting at all levels: Commonwealth, State and local, with implementation at the school level being consistent with values related to devolution of responsibility and community involvement and with new directions as far as the Commonwealth is concerned related to resource standards and accountability. To the extent that scarce resources can be allocated in a more efficient and effective manner, there is potential for an important contribution to enhancing the quality of the nation's education.

Scenarios for the future of resource planning in education. This final section of the study provides four scenarios for the future of resource planning for education in Australia. Two concern the role of the Commonwealth, with alternatives for either an expansion or contraction in the role. The other two concern the extent to which resource planning occurs at the school level with, again, the alternatives being for either an expansion or contraction. No separate scenario is offered for the role of the State since the role is largely accounted for in the discussion for each of the aforementioned scenarios. A likely and preferred scenario, being an amalgam of two of these four scenarios, is offered to conclude the study.

Scenario 1: A contraction of the Commonwealth role

The major indicator for a contraction of the Commonwealth role is economic, given the current deficit in national finance and the likely increasing pressure on the Commonwealth to reduce public spending. Recent proposals by President Reagan to reduce the large deficit in the United States included a phasing our of support to college students to save $2,100 million over three years and freezes in special aid to handicapped and impoverished students, the preschool Project Head Start and bilingual training for students whose primary language is not English. (Doerner 1984, p. 34). As noted throughout these three studies in Australia, parallel programmes in Australia draw substantial Commonwealth support.

There was some indication in the latter years of the Fraser Government that there would be a significant reduction in Commonwealth support. The then Prime Minister's statement of April 30, 1981 included the following:

> As with Health, the Commonwealth believes that the States have a primary responsibility for the administration and delivery of educational services. Accordingly, it proposes to reduce significantly its involvement in this area.
>
> (Harman 1982, p. 177)

In a statement on June 4, 1981 the then Minister for Education made it clear that while the Commonwealth regarded education, particularly at the school level, as a State responsibility, "The Commonwealth will maintain its overall commitment to education as a priority area of direct Commonwealth endeavour." (Harman 1982, p. 177)

The political climate changed markedly in early 1983 with the election of the Hawke government which has generally maintained the level of Commonwealth support. The economic pressures described above are significant, however, and with a slackening of recovery and the example of the United States, the alternative of a reduction in Commonwealth support may become attractive.

Scenario 2: Maintenance or expansion of the Commonwealth role

The major indicator for maintaining if not expanding the Commonwealth role in education is the serious shortcomings across the nation along the lines set out in the first study on secondary education, especially as far as the very low retention rate to Year 12 is concerned. In this respect there is no parallel with the United States where retention rates even in times of minimal national support have been relatively high. There seems to be widespread public acceptance of Commonwealth support as a national priority and, with a government by a party which is committed to social reform through education, there is unlikely to be significant change. The powerful private school influence is likely to at least maintain the status quo as far as support at the school level is concerned, irrespective of the party in power.

The economic pressures described in Scenario 1 are likely to be met by an insistence by the Commonwealth on a substantial measure of accountability at the State and local level. Developments along these lines have occurred in 1984. (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1984).

Scenario 3: A contraction of the school role

The major indicator for a contraction of the school role in resource planning is economic, in the manner set out in Scenario 1. There is evidence that financial restraints at the State or school district level in the United States have led to a recentralisation of responsibilities. (Caldwell 1980, p. 39). An interesting case is that of the Alum Rock Union School District in California which achieved considerable international attention through the Alum Rock Voucher Plan, what was intended as a prototype of a voucher scheme for financing parent choice in education. The plan did not achieve expectations, for reasons which included a tightening of finance at the district level:

> There is some evidence, however, that the Alum Rock District in the late 1970s was reverting toward more centralized control of teacher assignments, finances and curriculum. The problem seemed, in part, to be that teachers found it difficult to expand the size and reach of those programmes that were unusually popular with parents and students. But the retrogression from the ideal decentralization seems to have been brought on mainly by financial distress in the district.
>
> (Benson 1978, p. 229)

Scenario 3 thus sees a contraction of responsibility for resource planning at the school level because there will be fewer resources to plan for at that level as a result of pressures at both Commonwealth and state levels to reduce expenditure in education. Another indicator is the developing press for excellence in education, resulting in the political feasibility of a return to a large measure of centralised control of curriculum and resources.

Scenario 4: Maintaining increasing responsibility at the school level

Two major indicators suggest a maintenance of or an increase in school responsibility for resource planning. The first is increasing

acknowledgement of the limitations of national and state initiatives which result in uniform resourcing of schools. The most promising approaches are associated with effective planning at the school level. The second is the implementation of school-level programme budgeting which has the potential for improving the quality of local policy making and planning, but, at the same time, will serve as a mechanism for accountability as far as Commonwealth and State funds are concerned. This scenario is also consistent with the values articulated by the Commonwealth Schools Commission since 1973 and with a growing interest in community involvement in decision making in most fields of public endeavour.

A likely and preferred scenario

The most likely outcome seems to be a combination of Scenarios 2 and 4 with at least a maintenance of the Commonwealth role in resource planning and an expansion of the school role. The former is contingent on Australia maintaining its recovery from the recession; the latter on the successful implementation of school-level programme budgeting. The State role is maintained in the constitutional sense but with a continuation of trends which see centrally-based administrators developing through consultative processes those policies and guidelines within which schools will operate and to ensure that appropriate levels of accountability are maintained: the State level will serve largely to supply the resource news of schools with a framework of policy and accountability.

This combination is in many respects the preferred scenario for the immediate future, given the seriousness of a number of problems in education which call for national priorities. Continued public support for a substantial Commonwealth role and for community involvement in decision making at the local level point to the acceptability of the scenario, assuming a continuation of the nation's economic recovery.

A concluding statement on the three studies. The interface between education and polity has changed in very significant ways in the last decade. Constitutionally a State responsibility, with traditionally, low levels of Commonwealth and community involvement, the recognition of serious shortcomings has led to the setting of national priorities and a rapid expansion of Commonwealth support administered through the Commonwealth Schools Commission. The

first study on Secondary Education set out a number of concerns which have their counterparts in other countries but which appear especially serious for Australia when traditional international comparisons are made. The most visible indicator is the relatively low rate of retention to Year 12. A number of national initiatives were described, notably the Participation and Equity Programme of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. The second study described the emergence of a need for a national language policy. This need reflected the quite dramatic change in the make-up of the country since the Second World War. Commonwealth initiatives are evident through a number of programmes of the Schools Commission. The third study set the first two studies in the context of resource planning for education in Australia. Future directions for Commonwealth support were described along with trends for increasing responsibility for resource planning at the school level. The success of the expanding Commonwealth role appeared to be dependent on the success of decisions related to the allocation of resources at the local level.

These Australian studies support the view in the introductory statement of this book which suggested that the nations of the Asia and Pacific region have a special consciousness of the impact of change. What was needed, it was observed, was "a combination of clarity and flexibility: clarity with respect to the values to be supported; flexibility with respect to the responses by which this is done." In Australia, clarity has been enhanced through the setting of national priorities and flexibility is being achieved through improving the effectiveness of policy making and planning at the school level in a framework of increasing decentralisation. The constitutional role of the States is maintained but with a shifting focus, setting the framework of policy and accountability but essentially supporting what occurs at the most important interface of all – between pupil and teacher, between learner and learning experience.

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